

KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

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The KCTCS System Office is lessening its carbon footprint by promoting recycling, energy efficiency and environmental education.



KCTCS System Office

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) has 16 colleges located on more than 70 campuses across the Commonwealth, offering certificates and diplomas, as well as two-year associate degrees in 700 credit program offerings.

Besides education, the KCTCS System Office has been involved in many activities to reduce its carbon footprint, and has encouraged all of the KCTCS campuses to do the same. Some of the KCTCS System Office's activities were used as its KY EXCEL projects. KY EXCEL is Kentucky's voluntary environmental leadership program, which is open to everyone in the state.

"Tuition is a major portion of our revenue, so we have to be sustainable and accountable," says Billie Hardin, Sustainability Project Manager for KCTCS.

The System Office supports a collaborative culture that respects and preserves the environment, motivates employees and gives back to local communities, becoming more efficient stewards of financial, environmental and social resources.

At the System Office, there is a local sustainability team, which meets on a monthly basis to find ways to lessen the facility's carbon footprint. As a result of those meetings, several activities were implemented, including participating in the Commonwealth Energy Management Control System (CEMCS), managed by the Finance and Administration Cabinet. CEMCS is a software application used to track energy usage, monitor and maintain building systems, electronically audit current utility bills and automatically generate alerts if equipment operates outside of preset parameters.

Media equipment and lights are on sensors, and the HVAC system, which is being upgraded, and lights in individual offices are on timers to decrease energy usage. With the HVAC upgrades continuing, including the installation of new boilers, basic changes to its automation system have resulted in estimated energy savings of 8.7 percent (normalized for weather) for the period of December 2014 through May 2015. According to

Key to Success

Never stop looking for ways to reduce your carbon footprint.

Hardin, the energy savings result from avoiding the use of 262,900 kWh of electricity and 13,454 scf natural gas, creating a financial savings totaling \$26,000. More money will be saved after the retrofit is completed in the fall of 2015.

KCTCS has made recycling more convenient by locating bins throughout the interior and around the exterior of the 130,000 square-foot building. Aluminum cans, plastic bottles, paper, cardboard, corrugated cardboard and pallets are recycled. In a normal year, the KCTCS System Office recycles 32 tons of materials. In 2014, the facility recycled 125 tons after

implementing an imaging system to replace paper documents. Due to the recycling initiative, trash collection has been reduced from twice weekly to once weekly, reducing waste disposal cost. Also, the system office for KCTCS is on the site of a former brownfield. A brownfield is an abandoned or underutilized site that is contaminated or is perceived to be contaminated. The KCTCS System Office property has been cleaned and is in productive reuse.

KCTCS educates its employees on sustainability issues. Many meetings are conducted via computer to decrease travel.

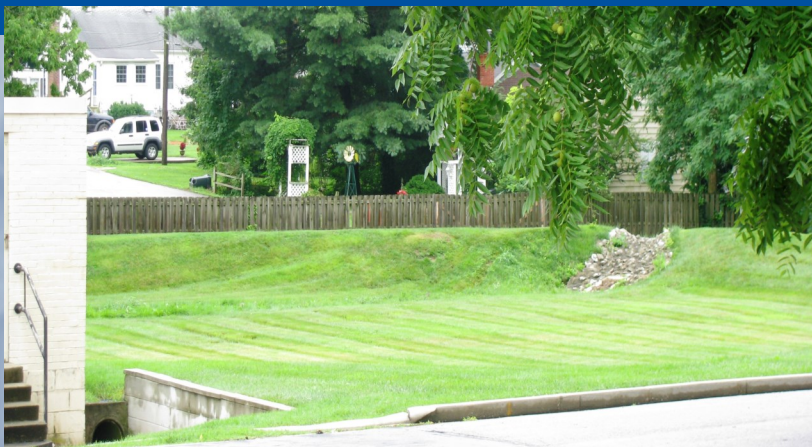
New employees are given a reusable mug and two cloth grocery bags to help them be environmentally friendly. Additional estimated annual savings of \$4,000 result from employees using a reusable mug instead of paper cups.

The facility also created a catch basin for stormwater next to a subdivision in an area that had previously flooded. Excess rainwater now flows into the basin rather than nearby homes.

“Educate the community about the natural environment, and use your campus to be a living laboratory,” says Hardin. “It makes your life easier in the long run. It’s like delayed gratification—feeling better in the future. The educational component is ongoing. If you drop the ball, you will lose.”

KCTCS will continue to focus on being more environmentally efficient and searching for ways to be more sustainable. Everyone is encouraged to carpool and decrease the pollutants created. Cleaning products used in the system office must be green-certified. As Hardin knows, sometimes it’s about taking baby steps to achieve goals, continually educating others about the need to protect our natural resources.

“We have a trust for future generations,” explains Hardin. “We have to ask ourselves what we can do today to make tomorrow better. It’s imperative that we teach responsible stewardship and work together to build resilient, sustainable communities to ensure a bright future for those following in our footsteps.”



LEFT: The catch basin minimizes flooding to a nearby neighborhood.



RIGHT: Recycling bins are placed throughout the KCTCS System Office building to make recycling convenient.